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Reagan praises Casey ceremony

By John McCaslin
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President Reagan yesterday praised the work of Central Intelligence Agency employees and Director William Casey as he broke ground for a 1.1 million-square-foot addition to the agency's Langley, Va., headquarters.

He told employees gathered at the ceremony that they and Mr. Casey "have been an inspiration to your fellow Americans and people everywhere."

Mr. Reagan's appearance followed by a day the release of a House subcommittee report charging that Mr. Casey, while Mr. Reagan's campaign manager, received "pilfered" Carter campaign documents before the 1980 Carter-Reagan debates.

Neither the president nor Mr. Casey made any reference to that report at the groundbreaking ceremonies for the \$190 million addition.

The president's participation in the CIA ceremony was "long planned," according to White House spokesman Larry Speakes, and his appearance was not scheduled to show his support for Mr. Casey.

Mr. Speakes said the president continues to have "full confidence" in Mr. Casey and is pleased with the director's leadership.

Commenting on the Post Office and Civil Service subcommittee report that alleges wrongdoing on Mr. Casey's part, Mr. Speakes said, "The matter, as far as the president is concerned, still rests with the Justice

Department . . . and decisions will be made by the Justice Department without White House interference."

Mr. Speakes said President Reagan has not read the report, prepared by subcommittee Chairman Donald Albosta, D-Mich., but will be briefed on its contents by White House Counsel Fred Fielding.

Mr. Casey, when asked by reporters yesterday if he had read the Albosta report, gestured with his hands estimating the height of the 2,400-page report.

Mr. Reagan told several hundred CIA employees gathered on a sloping lawn surrounding the ground-breaking site that significant changes have occurred in the CIA since Mr. Casey was sworn in as director in January 1981.

"New and vitally important missions are being performed that a few years ago many would have said were impractical or unachievable," he said.

Declaring that the changes under way at the CIA are a "reflection of a larger renewal among the forces of freedom throughout the world," Mr. Reagan said adversaries who had grown used to disunity or weakness are "not enthusiastic about the success of our policies."

"The work you do each day is essential to the survival and to the spread of human freedom. You remain the eyes and the ears of the free world," Mr. Reagan said, adding that the CIA is the "trip wire" over which totalitarian rulers must stumble in their quest for global domination.



President Reagan, left, Vice President George Bush, center, and CIA Director William Casey at yesterday's ground-breaking ceremony.

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